

7-6794

SECRET

December 3, 1955

card
Mr. Dallas S. Townsend
Assistant Attorney General
Director, Office of Alien Property
Department of Justice
Washington 25, D. C.

25X

Dear Mr. Townsend:

This is in response to your request of November 9, 1955, for any information in the files of this Agency or from my own personal knowledge with respect to the circumstances of the Ciano family's stay in Germany from August 27, 1943, to November 4, 1943, and the reasons therefor. I have had the OSS files, which are in the custody of this Agency, searched, and a memorandum prepared which summarizes the information therein. The memorandum is enclosed. Also, as your letter indicates, I was in contact with Countess Ciano in 1944 and 1945.

Very truly yours,

151

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Encl.

AWD ☐ 25X1

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Very truly yours,

Allen W. Dulles
Director

Enclosure

OGC ☐ 25X1

cc: DCI (2)✓
OGC

*Reversion
see 7-6794*

7-61151A

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Allen W. Dulles
Director

Enclosure

OGC 25X1

cc: DCI (2);
OGC

*Permitted
see 7-6794.*

SECRET

Approved For Release 2003/09/02 : CIA-RDP80B01676R000700170082-9

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: CIANO, Edda Mussolini

1. According to the interrogation report dated 14 June 1945, of Frau HILDEGARD BEETZ, a professed German agent, (Count) Galeazzo CIANO was living in the country home of (Prince) Sayn-Wittgenstein near Munich, Germany, until 19 October 1943, when he left for Verona, Italy. BEETZ indicated that on 10 September 1943, she, an interpreter in the German Foreign Intelligence Service (Amt VI) was sent to Oberallmannshausen (near Munich) to serve as interpreter for (Count) CIANO, the former Italian Foreign Minister. At that time, BEETZ stated that (Count) CIANO, his wife, Edda Mussolini CIANO, and their children were under a form of house arrest by the Germans. At the time of (Count) CIANO's departure to Verona, BEETZ indicated that the former did not know whether he was being taken to prison or whether Benito MUSSOLINI had done something to bring about his release; however, by a pre-arranged signal from (Count) CIANO to BEETZ, he notified her that he was in prison. According to BEETZ, Dr. Wilhelm ROEHL (Sturmabfuhrer), and Dr. Ernst KALTENBRUNNER (Obergruppenfuhrer u. General der Polizei), both of German intelligence, wanted CIANO kept alive at least long enough to disclose the whereabouts of his diaries and private papers, and of the Italian Foreign Office records. BEETZ further stated that, on 7 January 1944, Edda Mussolini CIANO appeared in Verona, and that, on the night of 7 or 8 January 1944, she crossed into Switzerland, with the aid of one Lt. Emilio PUCCI, where the CIANO children were waiting. (Countess) CIANO had strapped the diaries around her waist in her flight into Switzerland, according to BEETZ. BEETZ revealed that she had doublecrossed the Germans in an attempt to save (Count) CIANO's life and that when Edda CIANO appeared in Verona with the diaries, (BEETZ) did not have her searched or followed, but instead urged her to take off at once for Switzerland with the diaries. According to BEETZ, her connection with the case did not cease with (Count) CIANO's death. In a subsequent operation, she went to Switzerland in an endeavor to contact Edda CIANO and produce for Amt VI some important Italian Foreign Office records that had been hidden in Ramiola, Province of Parma, Italy.

2. The following information was taken from a volumed report completed on 20 June 1945 by Marchese Emilio PUCCI, an Italian Air Force officer and an intimate friend of (Countess) Edda Mussolini CIANO, concerning his role in connection with the Ciano Diaries. According to the report, (Countess) CIANO visited PUCCI in Florence, Italy, sometime during the first part of October 1943 and told him that she, her husband, and children were taken to Germany at the end of August, and were shut in a house near Munich as prisoners of the Gestapo. She stated further that her husband, (Count) Galeazzo CIANO, had been transferred to the prison at Verona, Italy, and that her children were still being held in Germany.

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(Countess) CIANO stated that she had gone on a hunger strike in order to get permission to telephone her father, Benito MUSSOLINI, and request permission to return to Italy. The report indicated further, that during the latter part of October or the first part of November 1943 PUCCI accompanied the Countess to the headquarters of MUSSOLINI at Gragno, Italy, where she talked to her father about getting the children back from Germany. The three CIANO children arrived in Italy from Germany at the beginning of December 1943. PUCCI drove (Countess) CIANO and her children to Milan, Italy, on 12 December 1943, where they turned the children over to some friends. These friends accompanied the children to the Swiss border where arrangements had previously been made for a clandestine crossing. After PUCCI and (Countess) CIANO had failed in their attempts to free (Count) CIANO from prison, and as the Gestapo was searching for the Countess, it was decided that the Countess should go to Switzerland. On 9 January 1944, at 5:00 P. M., (Countess) CIANO left the Hotel Madonnina at Viggiu, Italy, on foot, and walked across the border into Switzerland, taking with her the last five volumes of the CIANO Diary.

3. In an interrogation report (Otto LECHNER, Abt. VI (German intelligence) agent and official, dated 4 September 1945, the following information was revealed by LECHNER concerning the CIANO family's stay in Germany:

a. (Count) CIANO did not feel very secure after the events of 25 July 1943 and was looking for ways to leave Italy. He approached General BADOGLIO and the King, but to no avail. The Vatican and the Spanish Embassy refused to guarantee him asylum. He therefore decided that it was relatively safest to go to Germany for the time being, in order to try to reach Spain or Portugal from there.

b. Edda CIANO knew Dr. Eugene DOLLMANN (Standartenfuehrer), and approached him asking for asylum for the CIANO family in Germany. DOLLMANN forwarded the request through Herbert KAPPLER (Obersturmbannfuehrer), and, as a consequence, Sturmbannfuehrer HOETTL was sent to organize CIANO's escape together with DOLLMANN, KAPPLER and General STUDENT. (The latter three individuals were German intelligence service personalities.)

c. At first it was planned that LECHNER was merely to accompany the CIANO family to the Ciampino airfield. The family arrived at the Deutsches Haus, where LECHNER and HOETTL were waiting. There they were loaded into a closed truck and spirited to the Ciampino airfield where a transport plane was waiting for them. At the airfield HOETTL asked LECHNER to come along as interpreter. The plane landed in Munich and the family was given an empty villa at Oberallmannshausen to live in.

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d. LECHNER remained with the CIANO family in Munich from 28 August to 12 September 1943. During this time Dr. Ernst KALTENBRUNNER, head of RSHA (Main office of Reich's Security) came several times to visit (Count) CIANO. CIANO had begun to be apprehensive about the fate that was in store for him when he was not immediately flown to HITLER's headquarters. After a few days, Edda asked GIESLER, (fmu), Gauleiter of Bavaria, for an interview with HITLER for her and her husband; their apprehensions grew when an audience was granted for Edda alone. HITLER sent his special plane for Edda and she came back after one day with the impression that everything was fine and that HITLER had definitely no objections to the family's projected trip to Spain.

4. From 30 August 1943 to 24 December 1943, the New York Times carried the following data concerning Count Galeazzo CIANO:

a. 30 August 1943, p. w, col. 7 - reported to have escaped with his family to Germany.

b. 31 August 1943, p. 6, col. 6 - recaptured near the Italian French frontier.

c. 7 September 1943, p. 4, col. 2 - surrendered to the Italian Government officials after having sought sanctuary in the Argentine Embassy in Rome. His wife and children were permitted to remain at the Argentine Embassy.

d. 18 September 1943, p. 2, col. 7 - reportedly had been liberated by the Germans.

e. 31 October 1943, p. 12, col. 3 - reported to be held by the Germans for execution.

f. 2 November 1943, p. 10, col. 3 - reported to have been arrested by the Mussolini Regime.

g. 28 November 1943, p. 32, col. 3 - trial held in Venice, Italy.

h. 6 December 1943, p. 10, col. 6 - reported executed by the Fascists after a court martial.

i. 7 December 1943, p. 3, col. 6 - Germans deny the 6 December report.

j. 24 December 1943, p. 3, col. 4 - CIANO's trial reported to be delayed.